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Sacrifice and service

Charles Fiske (Bp.)

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SACRIFICE AND SERVICE

SACRIFICE AND SERVICE

*AN EFFORT TO SHOW THE JOY
OF THE MINISTRY AND TO
INCREASE ITS EFFICIENCY*

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND
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FOREWORD

THE addresses here printed were given for conferences of the rural clergy of the diocese of Central New York. I am conscious that the first personal pronoun obtrudes itself shamefully; but the addresses are printed just as they were delivered. To revise them and severely eliminate the pronoun would be to rob them of any small value they may have, as the printed record of an earnest and loving effort, among brethren, to take counsel together about our work, and to consider practically, in frank statement of personal experience, how we may do it more faithfully and efficiently.

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SACRIFICE AND SERVICE

I

THE OPPORTUNITY

THERE is no field of Christian work anywhere furnishing a larger opportunity for fruitful service than will be found in the rural districts of America to-day. You who are doing that work have in your hands the future of this nation. The country is a feeder to the city, and if the stream of its life is not soon purified, America will rapidly drift into practical paganism. When one thinks of the hardships and economies of the country minister's lot, one first feels an overwhelming pity; then comes the desire to hail him as an unrecognized hero; and then a feeling that he is rather to be congratulated on his splendid opportunity. He can do great things for his Lord—no one has it in his power to do greater.

Let me repeat, then, you cannot find anywhere an opportunity for larger service than you have here. I say that advisedly. For the sake of definiteness, you must permit me to speak of my own ministry. It has been widely diversified in character. It began in the rural work of an Associate Mission. Afterward it included successively the charge of a suburban parish in a well-to-do community, then of a comfortable church in a larger town, of an old-established congregation in a city of 40,000 people, and finally of a great city parish, with its own congregation and with a mission chapel in a poor district. I have been curate in charge of work among the colored people, have had under my care orphanages and industrial schools; have done my part in social service work in the congested city districts. Now, as Bishop, I am returning to the work with which my ministry began. And I repeat, there is no work more important or more compelling. You need not be ashamed of it. You must not spend your days in longing for something better. You have it in your power to make it the finest missionary work in the world.

A recent survey of one of the counties of

this diocese shows what our call to service means. The county selected is a typical Central New York district. It has a native American population living mostly in small towns and villages and in a prosperous rural section. There has just been completed a religious survey of that county. The population numbers 43,000. Of these 4600 are Roman Catholics; our own Church numbers less than 1400 adherents. The other 37,000 are Protestants of every form of belief and unbelief. An account of this survey was published recently under the title "New York Paganism." The title was justified. For the survey showed that 21 per cent of the people of this county, people of good American stock, are unchurched. In round numbers 9000 of them professed no religious preference, were absolutely unattached to any church, had no religious affiliations whatever. The figures are startling; but they do not by any means reveal all the truth. Of those who gave a religious preference, several thousand had a church connection merely nominal. At some time in the past some member of the family had been connected with a denomination somewhere; or a pastor was called on in case of death to hold the

burial service; but religion began and ended there.

There is one valley in this near-by district, seven miles long by one to two and a half miles wide, inhabited by a large and prosperous population, who for twenty years numbered not a single attached Christian believer. The village of Hamilton is the seat of a Christian university. Not far away were found communities where people were living without regard to the marriage laws and so densely ignorant of Christianity that after a funeral service one man asked the preacher "Who this Christ was" of whom he had been speaking—and asked the question in apparent seriousness, not in the mere bravado of unbelief. One of the canvassers visited a rural school the week after Easter, and when the children were asked what Easter meant their faces showed blank ignorance and the only answer forthcoming was that it celebrated Grant's birthday.

The facts revealed by this census are by no means abnormal. I have talked with country people in northern New York who showed not the faintest ray of knowledge about the gospels. Apparently they had not heard, or did

not remember, the simplest facts in the story of Jesus Christ. Some had never been in any kind of a church in twenty-five or thirty years. They did not know a minister of any religious persuasion. In Lewis County we made a survey of several townships. You know what the statistics revealed: In 225 families visited, with 330 persons under sixteen years of age, 203 certainly (and 225 probably) were unbaptized—and to that number should be added all the unbaptized adults. In one rural section covered by our census, out of 477 persons visited, only 15 attended and contributed to any church, while 66 per cent of the children and 38 per cent of the adults were unbaptized.

Remember that in New York State there are 1,700,000 people living in hamlets and in the open country, and you will realize what the field is. There has been a remarkable missionary awakening in this branch of the Catholic Church in the past quarter of a century. Have we not a right to expect it to mean a quickening of conscience with regard to the problem of rural Christianity? A century ago we lost the Middle West because we had not the evangelistic spirit; to-day we are talking

eloquently of carrying the Light of the Gospel to the darkest land and winning the farthest man, and seemingly we forget that the darkest spot is not necessarily in central Africa and the farthest man need not be the one who is most remote in distance.

Ours is an important work, therefore. Tens of thousands of these country people are living and dying without the Gospel. They have become, practically, heathen. They stay where they were born, with no definite Christian teaching and little clear moral instruction, growing more and more pagan with each generation. Or they migrate to the cities and help to make them more hopelessly heathen than they already are.

There is another side to the situation. Whenever any clergyman has made a definite effort to reach these forgotten folk, the encouraging fact is that they have proved quickly responsive to the message of the Gospel. There has been a turning to God worthy of apostolic days. A ten days' preaching mission in Madison County, to give but one instance, resulted in 19 baptisms, all but four of them adults.

The work, of course, is difficult. We are

hampered by lack of means and lack of laborers. But it is a work that is worth our best effort. I never could see how our city congregations are satisfied to sit in selfish contentment, with the slums at their door. Nor can I see how our rural congregations shall continue to ignore the crying need of the nearby country. We young deacons in New Jersey, where my ministry began, tramped miles over the country roads, or rode by bicycle through rural districts, and I know what the joy of such service is. Every clergyman can do something, whatever the difficulties. It seems unbelievable that if he tries to do his bit of work, he cannot in time win his congregation to an appreciation of his effort and to some cooperation in his labors.

The rural problem is really the village opportunity. Purely rural churches isolated in the open country are a meagre institution; but village churches are legion. There was a time when these village churches ministered to the whole country. The village church was pre-eminently a rural church. From the country came the ministers, the church officers, the financial resources of the various denominations. The roads that led to town were rough

and muddy, but on Sundays they were, as some one has put it, "splendid boulevards thronged with a procession of church goers." Times have changed. The church is no longer the chief centre of social life. There are other interests that have proved successful rivals, and the country no longer sends its Sunday procession to the village.

That is not our fault. Men of other days are partly to blame for conditions. They did not see the vision of service. They fell behind when competition was keen.

Nor was the blame all theirs. The best blood of the country was drained, that the cities might grow strong. Indeed, it is this which makes our problem to-day a burden of responsibility for the city as well as for the small town. The men who moved cityward took their religion with them, and many of our great city churches owe their very life to the sturdy Christianity of the rural church people who gave so generously of money and service in their organization. Of city congregations to-day it may be said: Other men labored and you have entered into their labors. Must they not reply: Yes, we are debtors, therefore, to all the past, and we mean to

pay the debt. All that has been done for us we shall return many fold in our gifts and service to others.

But preeminently the rural problem is the responsibility, as it is the opportunity, of the church in the village or the small town. It must minister to its old constituency or to those who are their successors. Just in so far as the task is undertaken will the town and village church be blessed. The clergyman who seriously tries to establish pastoral relations with the country folk in his immediate neighborhood will find a real reward, probably in actual parochial growth, but if not in such ways as statistical tables indicate, certainly in the joy of larger service.

In spite of discouragements and disheartenments, therefore, you who have been appointed to this work should have a certain pride in your calling. You frequently have a hard struggle with poverty; you are often asked to make bricks without straw; you are tempted to feel that any other field than your own would be less depressing. Lift up your hearts! Why did we enter the sacred ministry, dear brethren? Did we desire a quiet work amid congenial surroundings, where we

could minister to a select congregation of the faithful, and have just enough intellectual stimulus to keep us mentally alert? Did we wish to live in an atmosphere of genteel refinement? Did we look for a life of cultured companionships, with an admiring following of friends who should always be grateful for our spiritual ministrations? Were we dreaming of social advantages? Did we regard the ministry as a pleasant profession and the minister as a person whom everybody looked up to with respectful deference?

Just why did we seek holy orders? Surely, if you look back to those days when the call first came, and your vocation seemed clear, and you knew the happiness of a certain choice, all the wishes and desires of your heart centred on something else, on what is the real work of the ministry: to bring men to a saving sense of sin, and a glad acceptance of Christ, a firm purpose of amendment of life, a complete devotion of heart and mind in willing service. You wanted to win souls. You wanted to make God known to those for whom He was a name and nothing more. You wanted to feed men with the bread of life. You were to seek Christ's sheep who

are dispersed abroad that they might be saved through Christ forever. You were determined that you would never cease your labor, your care and diligence, until you had done all that lieth in you to lead men in the way of salvation.

Have we forgotten it, dear brethren? If not, a situation like ours, with so many thousands at our very doors who are indifferent, is a call to service. Therefore, we thank God for an opportunity, instead of complaining at a hard task. There are men who hear in the call to the mission field abroad a summons to sacrifice and service; why is it that the call to this mission field at home meets with so small a response? Are missionaries to go nowhere save where distance lends enchantment to the view and there is a certain romance and glamour about the work? Make no mistake, the romance dies out of service there, as it does here and everywhere, save as we feel that we have gone at God's call, to do His work. Believe that about your work, and its humdrum labor will change into fresh delight and the dull round of duty will take on a real charm.

It all resolves itself to this: Do we really

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love the souls of men? Do we care that they are content to live without God in the world? Would we rather serve or be comfortable? Do we believe that God blesses sacrifice? Are we content to wait for His reward?

II

THE FRIENDLY PASTOR

THE work of the ministry may be divided into four departments: priestly, pastoral, prophetic, and administrative.* The clergyman must be an executive officer. He is responsible for the business administration of his parish. He is also a preacher and teacher, who instructs his people in the Faith of the Gospel and with prophetic power shows them its meaning in life. He is a priest, who intercedes for them and feeds them with the Bread of Life. He is a pastor, a shepherd who knows his sheep by name and cares tenderly for both the young and old. We cannot afford to ignore any part of our work. We are quite right, of course, to cultivate any natural talent we may have and it is inevitable that we shall excel in one kind of work and do another only with patient and persistent effort; but every side

*The systematic administration of a parish had already been dealt with by one of the clergy in a paper read at a previous conference.

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of the ministry is important, and none of its duties may be neglected.

I want to speak first of the pastoral office, because what people need most of all is a clergyman who cares for his flock as a shepherd of souls.

The country suffers more to-day from lack of pastoral care than from any other one thing. And the curious fact is, that it is the need that is most readily supplied. Friendship is the easiest thing in the world to give, and the one thing most appreciated; and pastoral service is simply friendly ministration carried into spiritual activity.

When I began my ministry in the Associate Mission in New Jersey, the head of the mission had a bit of advice which he always gave to the deacons who came under his direction. "You will often grow depressed," he said; "and your temptation will be to sit down and brood over your difficulty. Whenever you get a fit of the blues," go out at once, if you can, and spend the whole afternoon making calls. You are reasonably sure to come back having forgotten all about yourself in the effort to be friendly and helpful to other people."

It is a rule I have never known to fail in practice. You will generally find people so delighted to have a visit, that you will leave them glad all the way through that you made the call. You will find others with troubles so much more serious than your own that you will be ashamed that you ever magnified your discontent. Here and there you will find some saint of God whose cheerfulness under the hardest trials will rest on you like a benediction. It will not all be plain sailing. Sometimes you will find people hard and unapproachable; it is a stimulus to try to get beneath the crust and discover the cause of their unresponsiveness. Again, you will find chronic grumblers who have nothing but complaints for your ears; it is better that the complaining should be made *to* you than *about* you. Frequently a word of explanation will settle the difficulty; at any rate, you will know how the land lies, and in the future you will not be travelling in the dark. There are parish disagreements that can be smoothed out only by yourself; family quarrels that you ought to hear about at first hand if you are to hear of them at all; village jealousies with which you need to have an acquaintance

if you are to avoid pitfalls in your work; a multitude of disagreeable things that are not half so big when you face them as they seem when you run away from them as bugaboos.

Usually, the cheery things far outnumber the unpleasant incidents. I know nothing likely to turn out more interesting than a trip down the main street, with a ten-minute chat in every store on the way; you come back from the walk with a new knowledge of human nature and a new liking for human kind.

Of course you are not to go about this friendly visiting with the idea of making yourself popular. You may be honestly liked by the good-natured people who make up the majority of every community, and yet be an utter failure as a pastor. Without being a self-conscious prig, you must always have in mind the purpose of your friendliness. You want to know as many people as possible; but you want to know them, that you may have as many opportunities as possible of getting at their hearts, not that you may be hail-fellow-well-met with all the young men of the town. If I have emphasized the note of simple friendliness, it is because most of us are more likely to err on the side of un-

conscious aloofness than of over-zealous good fellowship.

Somehow I feel that in a small town the clergyman has not done his duty if he does not know by name almost every man, woman, and child he meets on the street. If he knows them by their Christian names, all the better. When I make my visitation to the parish and stop to meet the people after service, I have my grave doubts about the ministry of the man who has to be prompted before he can call the names of the people who are introduced to me. In Maryland Bishop Paret used to ask us to spend the entire week after Good Shepherd Sunday (the second Sunday after Easter) in going over the names on the parish register, summoning to our remembrance as far as possible their individual characteristics, questioning ourselves about our care of each one, and then praying for each individually in the evening's devotion. It was an illuminating practice. It recalled many a forgotten face; it reminded one of many a neglected visit.

Out of the parish register one should take certain names that offer special opportunities for service. There is a sick old woman out

in the country who ought to be called on often; there are shut-ins to whom the offer of a private communion service should be made; there are men who never come to church; there are boys who are growing indifferent; there are young people home for the summer or the holidays; there are children who have not been baptized; people who have never been confirmed.

But we are not to confine our calls to our own people. With most of us the real fault in our ministry is that we allow it to be too confined. We lose the evangelistic note and are satisfied to minister to the people already in the fold. There are scores of men and women within sound of the church bell who are never found in any church. Some of them are people living in sin as the world regards sin; all of them are so living if they are neglecting God and His Church. In many cases a little friendly interest will win them. Whether it does or not, we are sent to the "lost sheep"; we are to call sinners to repentance, not simply to minister to the righteous remnant.

What are we doing about the man outside? Is *his* indifference to religion largely the result of *our* apparent indifference to *him*?

If you will pardon again a bit of personal history: I laid down a rule early in my ministry that I would never make less than fifteen hundred calls a year. In a small parish that meant visiting every family six times a year, with other calls besides. In country work it meant tramping many miles out of town. In the city it meant a perpetual round of visiting, sandwiched in between numerous other duties which crowded our days to the limit. Sometimes it meant a week given to dropping in on the men; not for a long chat in business hours, but just for a word of greeting that often led to a knowledge of affairs that never could have been gained in any other way.

We used to make about eight thousand calls a year in my last parish—and there were only three of us to make them—but of course that was easier, because people lived closer together. The interesting thing, however, was our method of calling: one day on absentee Sunday school scholars; another on parishioners who had been missed at service; again, a round of all the sick and shut in; one week on possible candidates for confirmation; another on last year's candidates who had not been regular at communion, and so on. We

had a book in which we entered each year the possible candidates for confirmation. Some names were put down the day after the Bishop's visit, and we began at once to give them special attention in the hope of getting them the next time. There was one man we tried six times in succession. He came at last and he has been one of our most faithful communicants ever since. Every week new names were added to the list, and when the confirmation instructions began the next year, one could almost tell at a glance how large the class would be, so well had the work of preparation been done.

There were certain definite gains that could be traced to this persistent calling.

One had to do with preaching. It was curious how many ideas for sermons and instructions arose from pastoral work. One came to find what people were talking and thinking about; what their special difficulties were; what they believed and what they felt they never could accept. Lines of instruction were suggested; sometimes people asked for an exposition of a particular text; often they even furnished apt illustrations for sermons. I had a vestryman in one of my first missions

who used to treasure up such illustrations and take a personal pride in his helpfulness whenever they could be used.

Another gain was a certain practical force in preaching. Sermons ceased to be mere religious essays if one found himself thinking about the particular difficulties of one of the men, or the special anxiety of a certain family, or the talk one day with a diffident young fellow who had been willing to speak only after several visits. Somehow the preacher came to have a definite object in each sermon. He knew why he preached it and what he wanted it to accomplish; and when he was quite clear in his own mind the thing was half done before it was started. The newspapers are always seeking for "human interest" articles. What we need in church are sermons with the human interest note, homely practical sermons that deal with people as they are; sermons that never strike the wrong chord, that do not abound in well-worn phraseology whose only merit is that of long use and conventional custom. Want of knowledge of the actualities of life is responsible for more ineffective sermons than all the devotion and study of a lifetime can offset. You must

know people if you are to help them, and your only way to know them is by going from house to house in constant pastoral rounds.

There was another by-product that seems crudely commercial. It was curious to note how back envelopes were paid in after a call. Sometimes the collections jumped up twenty-five per cent when we started in for a round of visiting on delinquents; though, of course, the subject of money was never mentioned. The call seemed to quicken the conscience. Or was it simply that the one visited came to realize that the parson had an interest in him, and so gave more gladly?

The most satisfactory calling was on the sick. If the illness was in any degree protracted, there was always the offer of a private celebration of Holy Communion. Whether the offer was accepted or not, there was a chance to make the family, as well as the sick person, realize the value of the sacrament. In one parish we ran as high as two hundred private celebrations a year, with eighteen hundred communicants, and in a smaller parish of two hundred and fifty communicants there was rarely a week without a private celebration. Then this followed: the sac-

rament of the altar came to be valued more and more by the whole parish. You make a point of offering to celebrate for one who is detained by sickness at Christmas, Easter, or Whitsuntide, and it is not long before the whole family comes to realize that there is a special duty to receive at such seasons, and in a short time duty becomes a privilege not lightly to be disregarded.

Calls which began as mere friendly visits often resulted in serious spiritual conferences. Sometimes people to whom confession would have been like a red rag waved before an angry bull would open their hearts gladly to the clergyman who came to be known as a friend first and was accepted as pastor later. In the evening calling some of the men would begin with captious criticisms of the Church and end with serious discussions of the evidences of Christianity.

There were practical results always. You found out what hymns people liked, which anthems were their favorites, when they thought the sermons too long or the services over prolonged. You discovered how often people were kept from communion by a fear of contagion and you could allay their fears in plain

talks which might have been out of place in church. You learned of the woman whom no one had called on; of another who had been offended by the usher; of a third who had been snubbed by the woman in the next seat; of a man who hated to be "given the glad hand" three times between the church door and his pew; of some one else who couldn't hear because you dropped your voice; after a while, when people became particularly confidential, you even heard criticisms of your mannerisms in the pulpit or of your way of reading the service, given with much hesitation and embarrassment, but always with at least an effort to be tactful.

And through it all, you taught the people several things:

First, that you were human like themselves.

Second, that you were really anxious to make them your friends and wanted to be theirs.

Third, that religion was something that could be talked about naturally, without a special pulpit intonation.

Fourth, that one could pray without a book, and that extemporaneous petition was not impossible for a Protestant Episcopal minister

when he was called on suddenly in case of need.

Fifth, that the Church was their responsibility as well as yours.

But why go on? The old saying has never ceased to be true that a house-going parson makes a church-going people. I have never been able to understand a man who did not believe in parish visiting. It means that he doesn't like people; and if he doesn't like them why in the world did he go into the ministry to help them? Or it means that somehow he considers that the bare fact of his ordination will bring people to him for counsel and guidance when they need it. He is forgetful that people must know and trust him in friendly intercourse before they will ever open their hearts to him as a priest.

To go back to the ministry of the pulpit. I have known many fine preachers whose sermons had little effectiveness because they were poor pastors. Either people did not go to hear them; or if they did, their eloquence fell on unsympathetic ears. On the other hand, I have known many a poor preacher whose rather platitudinous sermons were real messages from God, because in spite of halting

speech every person in the congregation felt the love and longing back of them. The preacher had become their friend and the sermon, therefore, was preached to receptive minds.

I have known many priests whose one expressed desire was to exercise their priestly functions; but the altar was practically deserted and the ministry of reconciliation unused, because they never showed that they really cared for their people by making it their business to see them in their weekday world.

Since I became a Bishop I have made visitations where it is impossible not to suspect that from year end to year end our clergy never give much more than Sunday services at their distant mission stations. If the expense prevents your calling, send me the bill, with expense and calls itemized; but do not imagine ever that *services* can take the place of *service*.

In his Yale lectures on preaching Mr. George Wharton Pepper has a remarkable chapter on "Revelation through Contact." I do not believe that anywhere has he said a better thing in seeking to articulate the voice of the crowd than this from that chapter:

“Our Lord first emptied Himself of His privilege in order to share our life. It was only thus that His call to discipleship became a command. To the end that the preacher’s call may be compelling he must lose himself in the life of his people. No formal contact will suffice. He must seek to become to each of them an acceptable friend. * * * Pulpit preaching is only the climax of the pastoral relation. * * * If [the preacher] is to reveal God to his people his own apprehension of God must be continually strengthened. This can come about not merely through pondering in solitude but through such pastoral service as will make the preacher’s life a transcript of the Incarnation.”

The Great Pastor, then, is our model. He mingled freely with people. He “loved folks.” His preaching for that reason was like a breath of fresh air after the dry-as-dust instructions of the rabbis. It came home to His hearers with the ring of reality. The only way in which our preaching shall have the same force of naturalness is in *His* way. “It means little to assert that Christianity is a social religion unless the minister of Christ shares the life of his fellow disciples. In season and out he

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must strive to make them realize that his life is at their disposal. If he does this for their sake, not officiously, but because it is the method of the Incarnation, he will some day have the happiness of knowing that all the while he was being used as a medium of revelation."

III

THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING

ONE finds in the very freedom with which the pulpit is criticized a pathetic proof that people, in the main, attach a tremendous value to the preaching office. Now and then some silly parson speaks slightingly of sermons—usually his own are of a type to justify his opinion of the place of the pulpit—but as for laymen, they believe in preaching; they are eager to listen to sermons that are worth while; they keep on patiently looking for preachers of the right sort and when they find a man who is indeed for them an interpreter of divine truth they give him a love and loyalty far beyond his deserts.

The real preacher can do almost anything with his own congregation. Whether his Churchmanship be High or Low, within reasonable bounds he can carry his people with him. They are responsive to his teaching and pathetically grateful for his help, and long after he has

gone to another parish he is remembered for the comfort he gave in sorrow, for the guidance in doubt, for the strength to do the day's work and the faith to wait patiently for the reward. When a new rector is to be elected, the vestry will more than likely count preaching ability as something like seventy-five per cent in estimating a man's worth—and it is useless to seek to convince them of error in their opinion. That to them is the vital part of the clergyman's ministry; of more practical importance than his priesthood. They hardly argue it out, but subconsciously they probably feel that there are many priests, and the sacraments are the same at whatever hands we receive them, but the preacher who can bring men to believe in divine grace and to accept it in the sacraments, who can convince them of sin and win them to such earnestness of life as will make their hearts receptive—no gratitude seems too strong and no praise is too high to express appreciation of what such a ministry means.

It may be that this is putting the emphasis where it does not belong; but it is a condition, not a theory, that confronts us, and to attempt to argue the average vestryman out of this

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feeling is like talking against the wind; indeed, when we came into court for the argument we should find so able an advocate as St. Paul lined up against us. He seemed to be with the laymen. He said that "it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."

Yes—the laity value preaching. The very fact that they complain so often about sermons is evidence of what they have expected to receive and have not ceased to hope for. The patience with which they continue to listen to preaching—even though it be terribly dull and bore them to distraction—is testimony to their unwillingness to give up hope and expectation. And the "common people" also hear us gladly when we really have a message for them. Witness the crowds of non-churchgoers and occasional worshippers who will go to church when some well-known preacher is announced. Witness the greater crowds who almost idolize a popular evangelist.

What a pity, then, that we put so slight a value on what the world counts our greatest opportunity! Why must a man belittle his prophetic ministry in order to emphasize his

priestly vocation? Above all, how can he permit himself to perform any function of his sacred office slightly? Pray, therefore, that you may be "able ministers of the Word." Ours is a tremendous privilege—to speak the message that reveals God to men.

I. You cannot preach acceptably unless, according to the measure of your time and ability, you are a student. Great thinkers are rare. We clergy are most of us conscientious, but nobody would accuse us of being, as a class, exceptionally brilliant. We do not, ourselves, find that we are burdened with original ideas. If, therefore, we are to make our preaching fresh and interesting, we must go to others for most of our thoughts, though of course we shall make what we find our own.

The lines of study are so many that you cannot fail to find one, at least, the pursuit of which will be a fascinating experience.

Modern criticism, for example, has re-made the Old Testament for us. It is possible to read the prophets now with new insight, because their messages have been translated into terms of modern life. We see them as men of God who lived in the thick of affairs,

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great religious statesmen, with clearness of vision to see how God was working His purpose out as age succeeded age. In the distress of nations with perplexity, when men's hearts were failing them for fear, they could trace God's hand in the movement of events. Read a modern critical commentary on Habakkuk, let us say, and see how in the travail of his soul he found the answer to all his questioning—a solution of the doubts and difficulties of his generation which we can read almost without a change of syllable for troubled hearts now.

Again, criticism has made the life and teaching of Christ no less vivid. Much of that teaching is in the rich, figurative language of the Orient, yet all along we have been insisting on some prosaic interpretation of it, utterly forgetful that Jesus was a child of his own time. Among other things, criticism has placed the Great Life in its proper setting.

The depth of Christ's teaching is inexhaustible. Take as an instance His social teaching of the Kingdom. There it was in the Gospel all the while; but it remained for a few men of the present generation to rediscover it and to find in it a solution for many of the pressing

problems of to-day. The same is true of the prophetic books and their social message. The prophets had the vision of a kingdom of righteousness; in days of oriental despotic rule, they had the courage to preach insistently of social and industrial justice. Their words bear a real message to a luxury-loving people to-day; their social ideal must be practically applied to an industrial world very different from their own, but with problems essentially similar.

Once more, there are new books of theology which give to old truths a modern expression and make us see clearly their application to present-day difficulties. There are historical studies which find in some of the early Church controversies such a likeness to twentieth century religious disputes as proves that history is ever repeating itself, and in those old conciliar decrees we get a remedy for wrong thinking now and a reply to the most up-to-date heresies, as well as a new appreciation of much forgotten truth. There are modern authors in the realm of practical religion who speak as prophets and messengers of the Eternal. Their books have in them a lifting quality; we cannot read them without the conviction that here are true seers, men to

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discern the signs of the times and to unfold for others what they themselves have seen.

How, then, can one help being a student? In our own travelling library are such books—read them. Read them for ideas, for seed thoughts. Make the thoughts your own and then turn them into plainer, homelier speech for your people.

I am afraid many of us have never learned how to read. We sometimes see men poring over books with a plodding faithfulness worthy of a backward grammar-school pupil. They read with painful persistency *just for the sake of reading*, and their study takes them nowhere. Read for ideas. Skim over books, if you will. Read till you get something which you know will interest you; and then take that and go through it carefully, write it out thoroughly, make it yours, turn it into everyday language, put it away in your mind for use. If you find you can't use a book, drop it. You are not reading for mental exercise as a conscientious way of occupying so many hours; you are reading to make yourselves more helpful and practical preachers of divine truth. Read, to dig the heart out of a book—as a friend of mine tells me he reads, to “rip out

its insides." Get hold of its central thought and let the rest go if you will.

But the clergyman must be more than a student. "The preacher who shuts himself up among his books at the beginning of the week, and emerges at the end of it with a carefully prepared sermon, may be guilty of something which approaches intellectual debauchery." Your reading is important, because without it your sermons will become mere pious platitudes devoid of real thought; but you must never allow yourself to luxuriate in thought. "I have heard many sermons," says Mr. Pepper, "which were obviously delivered primarily for the satisfaction of the preacher. He had become interested in a certain line of thought. He had happened on what seemed to him a bright idea. Or, perhaps he had been reading a book which pleased or pained him. Forthwith he was eager to ease his mind. Sunday was at hand and the pulpit was his. He never seriously asked himself what were the needs of his flock." So the hungry sheep look up and are not fed.

What you have read you must read with the thought of your congregation's need;

when you have read it, you must translate it into their speech. If you will permit a bit of personal experience, I have found it helpful to take a book for example like Canon Streeter's "Concerning Prayer," try to condense its arguments, and then ask myself, "How could I put this to the man who sits next me on the railway train?" Curiously enough, when one has tried in that way to turn theology into the everyday language of the street, almost invariably some one *does* begin to talk about religion—in my case, it is likely to be some one on the train whose tentative opening conversation is turned that way—and in more cases than one would suppose the mental exercise just finished has turned out to be the means of furnishing the practical word needed to solve the man's difficulty.

So: make the thoughts your own. Turn them into two-syllable words. Talk them out with somebody till you feel that you could explain them to the janitor.

II. What our preaching needs is the note of naturalness. Too often, sermons are mere religious essays. The very language used is a conventional phraseology reserved for the pulpit. The vocabulary is wholly different from

the everyday use even of the preacher himself. It is not surprising that when the sermon is written in a strained pietistic tone it should be delivered in a manner equally unnatural. There are men in the ministry—the finest fellows in the world, many of them, clergymen whom their people love and with whom they are on terms of good comradeship outside the church—who become absolutely different beings the moment they step into the pulpit. They have a pulpit manner, a pulpit voice, and a pulpit language unlike anything seen or heard anywhere in the weekday world.

The worst of it is that the stilted language of the pulpit is likely to be the outward and visible sign of a stilted unreality in the preacher's thought. He starts with certain religious assumptions which many in the congregation are not prepared to accept. He stresses certain facts in the scheme of redemption of which many are ignorant. He takes for granted religious experiences which they have never known. He fails to touch on trials and temptations which are actual and common. The preacher seems to be in a class by himself, speaking of things with which the average person in the congregation is wholly unac-

quainted. His thoughts are not their thoughts. He might as well be speaking in an unknown tongue about some supposed events that may have happened in an undiscovered country. "It is only too easy," to quote Mr. Pepper again, "for the minister to shut his eyes to what is actually going on all about him and to create for himself an unreal world of his own. It is equally disastrous, whether he indulges a dreamy optimism unjustified by effort and results, or whether he lapses into the habit of charging his own inadequacy to the perverseness of the men in the crowd."

Pray, let us be natural. First, in our language. Mr. Sunday and his slang are a reaction from a type of preaching that is hopelessly artificial. He may shock us by his unconventionality; but in the vernacular of the day, he succeeds in "putting over" his thought, the idea "gets across"; nobody can mistake what he means. The crowds who go to hear him and find his often commonplace sermons a veritable revelation are a standing reproach to us of the preaching profession. Is it possible that we have been speaking in language not understood of the people? Worse yet, with men and women

before us, "sinning, suffering, tempted, falling, struggling, rising," have we been so densely ignorant of their life and its problems, that we have set up artificial figures to be knocked down instead of fighting real battles, and waged war against theoretical sins, in ignorance of the daily facts of life?

None of you can by any possibility mistake what I mean. I do not ask that the language of the pulpit shall be permitted to degenerate into the vulgar slang of the street; but I am pleading for preaching that is simple, direct and natural.* I want the preacher to speak

* There is a remark of President Lincoln which illustrates what I am trying to make plain. No one had the gift of homely, practical speech to a larger degree than he, and yet no one has exhibited in his public utterances a purer, stronger English, classical in its simplicity, robust in its almost Biblical dignity and impressiveness. He was asked once to what he owed this gift, and his reply ran something like this:

"Among my earliest recollections," he said, "I remember how, when a mere child, I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I can remember going to my bedroom, after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down and trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their, to me, dark sayings. I could not sleep, though I often tried to, when I got on such a hunt after an idea, until I had caught it; and when I thought I had got it I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over

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to the men and women before him in exactly the same forthright, honest fashion in which he would speak were he and they sitting together at home quietly talking about problems of personal conduct. Read Mackay on "The Religion of the Englishman" and see how he does it. Read the Bishop of London's sermons. Remember that the most popular preacher in England to-day counts it a part of his equipment for the pulpit that he early made up his mind never to utter a sentence that would not carry in its entirety to the back of the church. The result is that he is never dull and never misunderstood. A better result still is that he is so human and so natural that when he speaks it is as if he were standing with you before the fireplace, with his hand on your shoulder, trying to convince you of a great truth—a truth which you see he believes with all his heart and believes will make a world of difference to you, if you can be made to accept it.

and over, until I had put it in language plain enough, as I thought, for any boy I knew to comprehend."

When one remembers that the result of this method was the ability to write the exquisitely pure and simple English of the Gettysburg address, it will be seen that plain speech need not degenerate into slang.

III. Preaching must not only be natural, it must be interesting. The trouble with a great deal of pulpit speaking is that it is unfailingly soporific. It might be well for the clergy to make a careful study of the daily newspaper, both its editorial page and its news sections. Such a study would show us how to make our preaching the sort people would listen to, even if it were nothing better.

We should learn, for one thing, that there is nothing like a good start. The first sentence ought to arouse interest. If it is a little startling, all the better. The preacher must begin in a way to make people take notice. Not long ago, I heard a man's initial sermon in his new parish. It was on the rejection at Nazareth, and it began like this: "It was the Preacher's first sermon, and when it was over the congregation rushed Him out of church. What He had said made the people so angry that they wanted to kill Him."

Of course, one could easily overdo the thing and fall into crude sensationalism or a tiresome cleverness. Even Chesterton wears on us with his everlasting epigrams; and cleverness is best adulterated with a moderate amount of the commonplace; but we may well brave

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the danger (most of us are not brilliant enough anyway to make it a very perilous experiment) for the sake of effectiveness. To begin with a short sharp sentence, an epigrammatic statement of the truth to be enforced; or to make the first paragraph tell in brief the whole story, as newspaper men are taught to do; or to open with a vivid description; or to ask a startling question: anything within the bounds of reverence that will arouse expectancy is worth while.

Then afterward the interest must be sustained. Don't be overlong. Stick to your subject and stop when you are through. Have one thing to say, say it in as many different ways as you can to enforce the truth; but do not drag in a lot of other things. We have all of us heard sermons which inculcated so many lessons that when the preacher had finished most of them had been forgotten. It is well to have definitely in mind one truth we mean to set forth, one lesson to be drawn, and content ourselves with that, conscientiously avoiding the temptation to expound a passage in all its significance. One thing must be taught at a time—line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there

a little—and *always* a little, not a feast. Study the column editorial of a great newspaper, and see how it says the thing it started to say and then stops. Drive in the truth at the end. Have a strong conclusion: not strong through much voice production, but because the words are as straight and true as you can make them. Close on the right note: with an illustration that really illustrates, or with a story that touches the emotions and stirs the conscience, or with a brief word of practical application.

IV. Our preaching will be more interesting as we make it more doctrinal. At first that statement seems like flying in the face of facts and flaunting popular prejudice. You will find most people inoculated with the current notion that it makes no difference what we believe if we are trying to live right. But in spite of that, as a matter of practical experience, people are always glad to get doctrinal teaching of the right sort. No one would accuse Dean Hodges of being a narrow dogmatist, yet we have his authority for the statement that there never was a time when the doctrinal sermon was more welcome than now, or more imperatively needed.

Mere hortatory preaching gets to be deadly dull. Repeated appeals to the emotions by and by leave the conscience unresponsive. We get gospel hardened. What is needed is that the ethical appeal should rest on something; it must have a foundation; it must be rooted and grounded. When we have teaching as well as preaching, the basis of reason on which the appeal is made as well as the appeal itself, people will always stop and listen. It is not too much to say that congregations as a rule are eager for that sort of doctrinal teaching. "They want to know the reason-of-things. They desire to believe, but not blindly, not at second hand, not with the parson's faith in place of their own. When the man comes who makes faith possible, who makes truth clear, who brings the gospel into plain relation with the great round of other truths, and into touch with common life, they greet him with great joy. To know the truth so that you yourselves possess it, so that it enters into your soul, and then in the might of that precious possession to go and teach your fellow men—this is the great achievement for the sake of which the pulpit exists."

Again, you will not misunderstand me. We

do not want doctrine for the sake of doctrine. Nothing must ever be taught in the spirit of intolerance, as a mere shibboleth wherewith we exclude all who cannot frame to pronounce some test word aright. There is a difference between dogma and dogmatism; between doctrinal teaching which is presented as the only safe foundation of helpful, warm-hearted service for God and man, and a narrow, sectarian insistence on doctrine for its own sake, with little or no effort to prove its necessity, its usefulness and its worth.

We must look at the situation squarely, brethren. What is the result of our failure in the teaching office? Tens of thousands of people who "like all churches" and love none. Thousands of our own people who have no church loyalty, will drift away the moment the minister fails to please them, are willing to shut up the church and give up the fight when difficulties arise. Worse yet, thousands who have no real understanding of the Christian faith and therefore no solid rock on which to build a Christian character.

Courses of short, simple instructions on the creed; expositions of the sacramental teaching of the Church; studies in early,

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Church history; short lectures on the history of our own Church; the observance in our teaching of the orderly sequence of festivals and fasts, in the round of the Christian Year with its different seasons emphasizing different Christian truths and furnishing a wholesome check upon individualism—patient teaching like this will build up a constituency to be depended upon. You must be careful to make such instructions interesting and practical; you must be over-careful not to let them degenerate into controversy; above all, you must show the spiritual application of doctrinal truth. If you do not know how to do all this, there are books that will teach you: a little book like “The Creed and Real Life” by Adderly; Dr. Barry’s devotional exposition of the Apostles’ Creed; or Dean Hodges’ practical historical studies; or Bishop Gore’s “Creed of the Christian” and his “Sermon on the Mount”; Father Carey’s booklet, “Have You Understood Christianity”; or “The Light Within,” and “The Master of the World,” among Dr. Slattery’s books on practical theology. There are some tracts by Dr. Huntington, written long ago but often republished. Or read some of the recent social

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studies in the Gospel and see how they make teaching merge into practice and dogma into life. Father Adderly's "Making Up Your Mind" is an excellent example of a very simple study of social Christianity, arranged for Lenten meditation, very brief and practical.

The practical result of such systematic instruction will be that when you do preach purely hortatory sermons they will be less likely to miss the mark. We have so much preaching these days that people are weary of being urged to be good. Give them a rest once in a while, and then when the moral appeal is made it will not fall on deaf ears. We preachers are like the boy of the fable, who cried "Wolf, Wolf," when there was no wolf, and then when the danger came no one listened. We have been so constantly urging people to be good that they unconsciously close their minds to the call, if not their ears to the very words, and when we have a real message for them in some special crisis, they are hopelessly unreceptive.

Moreover, we need a change ourselves just as much as do our people. It is a terribly dangerous thing to feel obliged to "preach

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a sermon" at every service. We cannot always be moved of the Spirit because a certain day and hour of the week have come. The consequence of such obligatory preachments is a dulling of our own spiritual perceptions. We preach because we must, and our preaching is unreal for ourselves and unhelpful to others. When that mood comes, suppose you let the sermon of exhortation give place to the sermon of instruction. You will none the less be doing your duty as an ambassador of Christ. The Gospel is "good news," not just "good advice," and whatever we do to proclaim it is preaching Christ, whether our address close with a suitable peroration in persuasive speech or whether it be a simple statement of a forgotten bit of Bible truth.

V. And yet, why should we ever be unready to preach? What a splendid calling ours is, to be Messengers, Watchmen and Stewards of the Lord—God's Messengers, with a word that is His, not ours; with a message from Him for men if we take pains to listen for it; ministers of reconciliation, to bring men to God and to make them His forever.

So back of all intellectual preparation for

preaching must be the devotional preparation. If we are to speak for God, we must go to Him for the message. What about our prayers, brethren—are they real? Our communions—are they as carefully prepared for as when we were laymen? Our meditations—do we have our time of quiet and intense thought, when we are alone with God? Have we cultivated the listening ear, so that our worship is not simply speech with God, but silence as we wait for Him to speak? Are we so busy working for God that we have little time to pray, and then so busy praying that we have no time to listen?

The measure of a man's power in his depth, and the quality of depth can come only by going apart, so that truth can be taken into the soul and wrestled with and pondered on and assimilated, until we are possessed by it and feel our whole nature swept by its force. If we are to be preachers with a message we must be like John the Baptist, who realized that "it was of far more importance that one soul should be all on fire with a sense of its obedience than that a whole city should be aroused and curious." Therefore, like John the Baptist, we shall make our wilderness,

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where God comes and speaks and we look into His face and listen.

Then we go out to preach and men perforce will listen to us; for there will be in our words something of prophetic fire. Dr. Hugh Black reminds us of how a great preacher used to say that in preaching the thing of least importance is the sermon. What he meant was, that with the preacher it is not what he says but *himself* that counts. The spiritual atmosphere he creates, the indefinable impression of earnestness and seriousness and conviction—this is the great instrument of persuasion. Men have been awed and influenced, perhaps, by speech not one word of which they can remember. It is not so important that they should remember, but it is of infinite importance that the imagination should be fired and the heart moved. In preaching what counts is not a man's words, but all that lies back of his words. We have not forgotten it, have we, brethren?

VI. One word more and I am through. If once that shall become the spirit of our preaching, there will be a wonderful change in the Church we serve. It will become more truly an evangelistic Church.

I am fearful, brethren, that we do not sound the evangelistic note often enough or strongly enough. Somehow we have been losing our sense of an awful responsibility for men's souls. With at least one-fifth of the people of America unchurched, and with millions more indifferent, how can we of the ministry fail to realize our mission? Have we ceased to believe in the possibility that souls may be lost? This is no time to enter upon a discussion of the doctrine of eternal salvation and eternal punishment. Is it not enough to know that Jesus Christ taught with the utmost solemnity that an awful doom awaits impenitent sinners? Whether it be eternal punishment or annihilation, or whatever else men may name it, surely our Lord declared that it was because men were lost that He came to save them. How can we rest, then, if we are not making Him known? Once we look upon this world as made up of individual men and women—multitudes, multitudes of them in this valley of decision—each with the possibility of future happiness and each with a possibility of future loss; once we have come to realize that a word from us may mean the everlasting welfare of a soul, we shall surely preach as we never

preached before. Every sermon will be a serious, solemn, awful effort to reach men's hearts. We shall not say true things as if we did not believe them, and leave the actors to utter fiction as if it were truth. There will be something back of our speech, and somehow men will feel that it is there. The words may be halting and stumbling, but there will be something to carry them through.

And we shall not forget the man outside. Is it not true of most of our parishes (as, indeed, it is true of the work of other Christian bodies) that we are failing to preach a gospel of wide salvation? The average rector ministers year after year to the same people. His congregations have their more or less regular growth, by the addition of candidates for confirmation from the children of the parish or in recruits from other Christian societies. The clergy loyally minister to these and their like. Meanwhile the great mass of the unchurched are not reached at all. We are cabined and confined within our own parish bounds, tied up to our own little work. Our message rarely goes beyond the four walls of the parish church. We limit our efforts to a work, which, however good it may be as far as it goes, is not in any

real sense a work of evangelization; and we have allowed ourselves to come perilously near to the point where we are content to have it so. There are thousands of the unchurched and we do little to reach them; we would welcome them if they came, but we do not go after them. Sermons are preached to confirm in the faith those who already believe; addresses are given to instruct and edify the faithful; but we are really doing very little to preach the Gospel to any outside our own little respectable world. Doubtless we try, now and then, to do something; but how many of us realize that our success or our failure is the measure of the Church's work?

The clergy, of course, must be supported by an active and sympathetic laity, if any real evangelistic work is to be done; but it is our privilege to arouse the laity. What do we and they know or care about the man outside? What are we doing to win him to the Christian religion? Down in the bottom of our hearts, do we think it will in the faintest way affect his future happiness, if he is not won? If not, what is the use of preaching anyway? But if it is a matter of his eternal welfare, how can we rest until we have

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done something to make him hear our Lord's call?

I should like to report to the next convention that some of you have tried to preach the Gospel where its message is seldom heard. I should like to hear of walking tours to lonely communities now almost forgotten, or of men who have given at least a little time to go out as the disciples did, two by two, into every city and place within reasonable reach. I should like to hear of preaching that is really gospel preaching. And I am sure that when we have it, you and I will feel that we have received a greater blessing than we gave. Such work may mean a new ministry of conversion to our own people. Who shall say that it may not mean something of conversion for ourselves?

IV

THE PRIEST IN THE CHANCEL

WHY are we Churchmen? And why are you in the ministry of the Church? In half of our parishes the larger, better built and more pretentious house of worship of some other congregation so overshadows our own church as to make it appear pitiably poor and small. Yet you have never wished to change. Indeed, the remarkable fact is, that many of you came from the ministry of other Christian bodies to seek Holy Orders, and you would never dream of going back. Why?

Whatever lack of conviction there may be among our lay people, as a rule the clergyman knows why he is where he is. The layman may be a Churchman simply by birthright inheritance; his father and grandfather were such before him. Or, the Church appeals to his taste; it is the Church of most of the people of his set. It is not so with the clergy. For the most part they have a reason for the hope that is in them. They believe in the

Church and the Church's system. They believe in their priesthood, and with every overcrowded community showing the weakness of a divided Christendom they feel that the only hope of union lies in a return to the apostolic ministry. Seeing as they do the gradual disintegration of faith that marks one of the failures of Protestantism, they feel that the Church is a bulwark of belief. Perhaps they came only gradually to such convictions, and in the beginning their Churchmanship sprang out of the desire for a dignified and reverent worship. Amid the crudities of the non-liturgical systems, the Prayer Book came satisfying a real longing for God. With church buildings everywhere becoming hardly more than lecture auditoriums, the Church of the sacraments was to them a haven of rest. They felt its places of worship to be real Bethels. "Surely, the Lord is in this place. This is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

So the Church means much to them. They love its services and sacraments. And they believe that the country *needs* the Church: its heritage of faith, its reverent worship, its gifts of grace.

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Then why not act as if they believed all this?

I have not the faintest doubt that the devotional spirit of the Prayer Book can re-create for the country its lost ideal of worship; but it can never do this if its services are read so indifferently as utterly to destroy their beauty and prejudice the occasional worshipper against all liturgical forms as being cold, mechanical and impersonal.

It is necessary to speak frankly, because there is more criticism of the clergy on this point than for almost any other fault. I am always hearing complaints from the laity about bad reading. In three cases recently clergy have failed of advancement because their rendering of the service made a call impossible in the opinion of the committee sent to hear them. The pathetic part of it is, that in many cases it seems too late to change. Faults have become fixed, mannerisms apparently hopelessly exaggerated.

But is it hopeless? "Bad reading," says Dean DeWitt, "is a sin of ignorance which becomes wilful sin only when persisted in after information." Practise the reading of the service. Get some candid friend to criticize

—your wife may be the frankest and kindest listener. It is possible that some one can give you a few lessons in voice production. When you hear others read, if they read well, ask yourself *why* their reading is better; if they read poorly, try to discover where the fault is and conscientiously compare your own method. In your clerical gatherings, make a study of the matter and criticize each other. Be a little easy on others; have a heart of steel for your own faults. Most of them can be overcome if they are but recognized. “It will, of course, require patience to overcome a habit of years’ standing; but it will not be so difficult as one might expect—allowing for occasional lapses.” “A man of good intelligence, knowing what his characteristic faults are, even though he has no elocutionary training, with the help of a good book on this subject can make a marked improvement, if he can be made to realize that it is a question of success or failure in his vocation—as it often is.”

To make it a question of success or failure is not putting the matter on a low plane. We are priests of the Church; God’s mouth-piece to the people; *their* voice in offering praise and prayer to Him. And success or

failure is not a mere matter of personal ambition; it is a question of success or the lack of it in making divine things real and vivid, in creating an atmosphere of reverence, in lifting men's hearts to God. Carelessness and slovenliness in the chancel or sanctuary may seem to others—however unkind the statement appears to you—an indication of a life that lacks devotion. Not to labor to correct the fault implies indifference to our high calling and privilege.

Moreover, to continue to maltreat the Prayer Book is to deprive the Church of her greatest missionary asset. For, as I said at the outset, most people need to make the great discovery and learn what worship is. Once they have learned, God will become for them an intense reality, and prayer will satisfy a real longing. If as we gather together for worship, there is no deepened sense of God's presence, no catching of the breath, no glow at the heart, no sacred sense of mystery—it simply means that somehow we have failed to speak as God's messengers. I have heard our Lord's sacerdotal prayer in the seventeenth chapter of St. John read with such reverent awe that it seemed as though one saw Christ Himself and were hearing Him speak. And I have

heard the wonderful lesson of the Burial Office repeated in such metallic fashion that my own sensibilities have been racked, and I was quite certain that the mourners had gone away without a ray of comfort. To read the offices and offer the Holy Eucharist becomingly will mean, from the practical side, Church growth and the quickening of parochial life, increased attendance and increased devotion; from the spiritual side, a realization of our own holy office and a deepening of our own consciousness of the divine. We shall create for ourselves an atmosphere of adoration, and it is quite possible that the very tones of our voice may carry to others what has become very real for us.

Nor is it simply a matter of good or bad reading. Will you bear with me if I go to the limit of courteous counsel in speaking of a matter which is very dear to my heart?

Somehow I feel that many of the clergy do not *know* the Prayer Book. It is your duty to know it; every line in it. Not to be familiar with it, from cover to cover—its rubrics; its permissive flexibility; its liturgical history—is to be like an army officer who is ignorant of the contents of his manual of arms.

Study your Prayer Book. The revision now in progress furnishes a special opportunity for such study. The changes proposed indicate that in a few years we shall have a manual of devotion wonderfully improved in flexibility and simplicity and really enriched through needed additions. In the meanwhile the book, as we now have it, is richer and more practically adaptable than some of us have realized. So study your Prayer Book. Begin at the beginning and read what it has to say "Concerning the Service of the Church." Do you know, for example, that the various offices are distinct services and may be used either separately or together, provided that none of them be habitually disused? There are mission parishes where the Litany is never said, because the clergy have not discovered that a place for it can be made after the Collect for Aid against Perils in the Order for Evening Prayer. What a difference it would make to have that change in Advent or Lent! Do you know how Morning and Evening Prayer may be shortened? Are you familiar with the Table of Lessons? Do you remember about the alternate tables authorized for use? And what about the occasional offices? And the prayers

and thanksgivings? And the post-communion collects? And the possible enrichment of the evening service? Above all, what about the Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion? You should know every word of it by heart, even though you use the book. At any rate, you should have studied carefully every sentence of the rubrics. Only so can you offer the service with due impressiveness and loyal accuracy.

Then there are the feasts and fasts. Of course there are places where a service is impossible on holy days; but there is a provision for declaring to the people "what holy days or fasting days are in the week followed to be observed," and it is quite possible to give a few words of explanation about them and to urge some recognition of them in private devotion; and it is more feasible than most of us think to keep them at the church in the home station.

Or the Christian Year. It is a splendid scheme for teaching the whole round of Christian truth; yet one hears sermons during the different seasons that argue for a complete ignorance on the part of the clergy as to the teaching of the day. Services are arranged

with utter disregard of feast or fast. On Whitsunday, in one church there was not a single hymn of the Holy Spirit. The hymn before the sermon was "In the Hour of Trial." It was not the occasion of the Bishop's visitation, and so there was no possible excuse for the selection! There seems to be a special fondness for "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" as a confirmation hymn, and I am compelled to hear it not only in Lent, but at Christmastide, Epiphany, Easter, Whitsuntide and All Saints. There are many beautiful Eucharistic hymns, but one would suppose that the "Communion Hymn" necessarily meant 225, with its "hopelessly confused language."

Study the Prayer Book. Read its rubrical directions, so that the services may always be properly rendered. May I make a few suggestions:

(1) Note the manner of printing the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the General Confession, the Confession in the Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion, and other prayers which are to be said by priest and people together. It will be noticed that all such prayers, intended to be said in unison, are broken up into phrases, each phrase begin-

ning with a capital letter. This means that there is to be a slight pause at the beginning of the phrase, so that the congregation may keep in unison and the prayer be said with dignity and reverence. What often happens is that the clergyman races through the General Confession and the Creed with never a pause for breath; the congregation race after him in the hopeless effort to catch up, nobody has time to think of what he is saying, and what should be a solemn and reverent acknowledgment of sin or a triumphant proclamation of faith degenerates into a test of speed and breathing ability. A moment's thoughtful consideration will recognize in the capital letters sign posts warning against irreverent haste.

The people must be given their part in the Church's worship. I have heard the psalms read so rapidly that it was an utter impossibility to expect a congregational response. And as for the services themselves, and alas! the Holy Eucharist sometimes, one is reminded of the Duchess in Alice in Wonderland. "Curtsey while you think, child; it saves time."

(2) There are certain things to note by way of liturgical correctness. For example: The

offices are addressed to God, not to the congregation. Do not, therefore, turn to the people in reading the opening sentences or the psalms; say them choirwise. Again: the *Amens* printed in italics are for the congregation. There is a rubrical note to the effect that "here and at the end of every prayer" the people shall make the answer. There is, therefore, no authority for the growing custom among the clergy of repeating the final *Amen* after the benediction or minor grace, sometimes saying it with the congregation, more often waiting till that response has died away and then emphatically repeating it.

(3) It will be well to study the lessons and other parts of the service beforehand. This will avoid certain errors and crudities of pronunciation and some otherwise unavoidable stumbling over proper names.

The lessons deserve particular attention. Some of the clergy seem to have but one thought, that the voice must drop at the end of each sentence, that the reading tone must be as lugubrious as possible, and that it is irreverent to vary overmuch from the monotone. The lessons are *lessons*; they should be read to bring out the meaning as clearly

as possible. They should be studied, so that the reader is thoroughly familiar with them. Sometimes, indeed, especially in the case of the Old Testament selections, it may be well to preface their reading with a few words of explanation, telling the connection with the lesson of the previous Sunday, or giving some interpretation of the prophetic passages. This is done in England more often than here. It would often lead to edification if the privilege were exercised with care. In connection with this, would it not be well to take time for a study of the prayers themselves? Here especially there are grave mistakes in emphasizing the wrong words. Even the Lord's Prayer is often read incorrectly as to emphasis. We ought to ask God to forgive our trespasses as *we* forgive those who trespass against *us*—not trespass *against* us.

(4) Be careful in enunciation. Bishop Hall tells how puzzled it made him when he heard a prayer that God would "send down upon our Bishops *another* clergy," though of course that was better than asking that He send down upon our clergy another Bishop.

In like manner we often hear the announcement made: "Here rendeth the first lesson,"

which is hardly diplomatic even though the reader *has* been cruelly murdering it. Nor ought we to ask God to "*make lean* our hearts within us"; our congregation will usually attend to that, on the same principle on which it has been said that the clergy need never pray to be poor and humble; it is enough to ask for humility; the parish will keep us poor without asking.

If the shortened form of the commandments should be adopted in our next prayer book revision we shall at least avoid the proclamation that God made the "sea and *all the tin-themis*"—an act of creation that has mystified many a worshipper.

(5) See that the Epistle and Gospel are correctly announced, according to the rubric on page 224. It is not: "The Holy Gospel is written in that according to St. John," any more than we should say "The Epistle is written in that to the Galatians." "The Holy Gospel is written in the first Chapter of St. John, beginning at the first Verse."

I never supposed it would fall to my lot to hear it; but it has happened. At a recent service the priest who read the Gospel for the day closed it with the words, "Here endeth

the Gospel.” It was an error of which I supposed no one but a newly ordained and much embarrassed deacon could ever be guilty, and there came to remembrance the story of the Bishop who heard the announcement made in the same way and in devout ejaculation said, “God forbid!”

(6) Common sense would teach us that the service of Holy Communion should begin at the Epistle end of the altar. That is in accordance with liturgical usage, and it is absurd to start the service at the Gospel end then solemnly walk back to the other side to read the Epistle.

There is room, of course, for difference of opinion as to the meaning of the English rubric and our own, and the matter is not of vital importance. According to the decision of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Lincoln case, the rubric probably had reference to the tablewise position of the altar in the body of the church or choir; “the right side” may, therefore, mean the front, without designating any part of the front. No place at it can be declared illegal—so why not follow the liturgically logical custom? If the change proposed by the present revision be finally ap-

proved, we shall at least be freed from much fruitless discussion of the meaning of the rubric, and no one need trouble his conscience any longer about a small thing which some have seemed to regard as threatening rubrical anarchy!

(7) Going back to the observance of the Christian Year, it is well to remember that there is provision for a hymn in place of the Gloria in Excelsis, a fitting change for Lent, as is also the custom of substituting the Benedicite for the Te Deum.

I feel that an apology is due you for stressing these details. It would be better to ask you to get such a book as Dean DeWitt's "Decently and In Order," and to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest its common sense advice. You may not agree with all of its conclusions; but it is full of sanity and sense, and for practical usefulness I doubt if you can find anything else half so good. Or read Bishop Hall's "Notes on the Prayer Book" for detailed interpretation of the rubrics. Or Bishop Grafton's "Plain Suggestions for a Reverent Celebration of the Holy Communion." This is not a bit of ceremonial propaganda, but a very modest and moderate book of instruc-

tion about things which every priest should know; and if I am not mistaken the Bishop's literary executors have made provision for its distribution free or at small expense to mission clergy who cannot afford to buy it.

No time has been left to touch on other things, because if you have taken all this in the right spirit the rest will follow of necessity.

There will be no need to speak of the value of the historic ministry: you will appreciate, of course, what I should wish to say, if so much time has been spent on the details of one of its functions. There will be no need to speak of sacramental grace: your own experience must tally with mine, that a reverent Eucharistic celebration teaches more than any words of instruction will ever convey. There will be no need to urge more frequent communions: you cannot study the Prayer Book without appreciating the teaching of the Church on that point. There will be no need to show why we are Churchmen: you *know*. Only: why not try harder to make others know? Why not make them feel the awe and mystery that first drew you to your holy calling? There will be no need to speak of the training of the

congregation in the use of our manual of devotion: your own training will make you keen to have them understand the power of *common* prayer.

There is indeed nothing to compare with the heritage of the Prayer Book. Whether it be the Holy Communion or the choir offices, whether they be rendered with all the accessories of splendid music and beautifully appointed churches, or simply said in a modest chapel or hall, there is nothing more beautiful on earth. It was of the service in his modest country church at Everton that Berridge wrote: "When I say 'The Lord be with you,' I love to hear the murmur of response breaking from all the corners of the church, 'And with thy spirit.' It reminds me of those words of the Revelation, descriptive of the worship of the redeemed at the marriage supper of the Lamb, 'I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, saying Alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.' The dissenters have nothing to compare with it."

The last sentence is a bit of pardonable pride, not mere complacent superiority. Ber-

ridge never meant it to be a criticism of others; it was a thankful appreciation of our own blessings. And every word of this address, I wish you to believe, carries the same spirit of gratitude for a splendid inheritance and of prayer that others may know its worth and power.

Yet it is quite possible to make of the Prayer Book a mere fetich. There are occasions when one feels very strongly the need of some adaptation of a liturgical service or some addition to its stated prayers. In times when some special event fills the minds of the worshippers, nothing in the authorized forms of devotion will quite express the need of the hour. To take a very extreme instance, I remember attending service in the summer of 1914 on the Sunday after the beginning of the great war. On that day the congregations gathered in church—unless they left behind them, as they entered the door, every consideration which up to that time had occupied their minds—had but one thought; yet not one word of prayer to fit the occasion did I hear in the service that morning. With all Europe plunged into a struggle at whose approaching horror the civilized world stood aghast, it was

the height of absurdity that in hundreds of our churches no appropriate prayer was offered for the thousands of Americans abroad, some of them close friends of many in the congregation, or for the millions engaged in the struggle or the many millions more of noncombatants in peril. With no reference in the sermon and no special petition in the service concerning the one matter which filled our thoughts, the impression made upon most minds that Sunday was that the Church's worship was a formal, inflexible, ceremonial function, insensitive to the world's need. In non-liturgical congregations *some* prayer was offered, and however crudely expressed it thrilled with a fulness of meaning from the mere attempt of the minister to voice the silent petition of his people. Only in the liturgical churches did one have the feeling that Sunday worship was a thing apart, a sacred performance of an unchanging rite. There had been no time for Bishops to set forth special prayers; but no one need have waited for that—and indeed, many did not wait as did the rector in this particular parish.

The circumstances, of course, were extraordinary beyond measure; but oftener than

we realize a similar situation arises. The Titanic disaster a year before; the Lusitania outrage later; the Mexican crisis; every now and then a local situation, perhaps, calling no less clearly for something out of the ordinary, if we are to avoid the barrenness of inflexibility. One who loves the liturgical service and is keenly alive to the crudities of any other worship may nevertheless feel with deep dissatisfaction the poverty of devotion in a slavish adherence to accustomed rites.

I would suggest, therefore, that there are times when it is well to introduce something of free prayer in public worship. We must guard against the crude and sensational, and certainly we should not introduce unauthorized devotions, but such prayer may be made a part of the pulpit rather than of the chancel ministrations. Who shall forbid me, in preaching, to pass from instruction or exhortation to ejaculation? And if to ejaculatory prayer, who shall forbid my *continuing* in prayer? Such unusual forms of devotion will be most impressive and effective, especially if in the sermon itself there is at least a reference and application to what is uppermost in the minds of the congregation. Do not

hesitate occasionally so to open or close the sermon.

I say *occasionally*, because the practice should not be so frequent as to lose its freshness, its impressiveness and its value. For ordinary occasions the liturgical prayers fill every need and meet every aspiration; only unusual occasions call for a departure from custom. But at least let there be enough of such variation to show that public worship touches human life very closely. Nor is the need only for times of public stress. I have often felt that in Lent and on other special occasions sermons should close with free prayer—the special effort to deepen the spiritual call may well evoke special prayer which shall voice the desires of quickened consciences.

At times, perhaps, it may be well to vary the method by the use of the ancient bidding prayer before the sermon. I have long used this at All Saints time and in connection with the patronal festival of the parish; and for its use we do not have to wait for its insertion in the Prayer Book—it is merely a summons to intercession and devotion. Or, if that is not used, one may read requests for intercession and then sum up the petitions in the

Lord's Prayer. Anything within reason, to make our people understand what prayer is, and to give the note of naturalness and reality to their worship.

Best of all is specific instruction to show how the Eucharist may be offered with particular intention. The mass of worshippers do not possess the devotional instinct to such a degree as to find in this use of the Eucharist, unless they are patiently taught, a sufficient expression of great and pressing desires. If taught, they soon learn to fill out the skeleton of the service with devotional aspiration. The Jewish High Priest, when he went into the Holy of Holies, bore the names of the Children of Israel engraved on the breastplate of judgment for a memorial before the Lord continually. Our Great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, now gone into the presence of the Father to offer the avails of His sacrifice, bears our names on His heart. What He does in heaven, His priests do also in the representative sacrifice of the altar. It only remains for the people to realize this and they will soon make the Eucharist a great offering of devotion, the pleading of the sacrifice of Calvary with special remembrance of special needs.

Indeed, here we get to the very heart of the matter, and here the priest has his greatest chance to make the worship of the sanctuary real and satisfying. Are we seizing the opportunity? Are we using our altars as we should?

Let me picture the ideal of what a church should be. Sunday after Sunday, and day after day, as its doors are opened, we see our people coming together, eager to enter God's house and to kneel before His altar. We read their hearts, and find that each has its joy, its sorrow, its trial or temptation. In their sorrow or rejoicing they are not alone. The priest at the altar has not been left to *guess* at their needs or blessings; they have taken him into their confidence, have told him the evil and the good together; and they know that their names are on his lips and in his heart as with uplifted hands he petitions the throne of grace. And they know further that the prayers of the whole congregation are joined with his as he makes the oblation. They are not alone—the Eucharist has been made theirs, the merits of Christ's atoning death have been pleaded for each, individually, and together with the intercessions of their Lord in the heavens, the prayers of the faith-

ful have risen like an incense cloud before the throne of grace for each. None has been forgotten, none overlooked.

This is our ideal of a church in use. You and I will never have fulfilled our ministry till we have made our people see it, till we have used every effort to translate the ideal into living reality.

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